

3/4/81

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1981BUENOS01514

Page: 1

Channel: n/a

Q19

<<<<.>>>>

PAGE 01 BUENOS 00015 061218Z
ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 AID-07 INR-10 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00
H-01 IO-14 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-06 L-03
TRSE-00 PM-09 PA-01 OMB-01 INRE-00 ICAE-00 SP-02
SPRS-02 /088 W

-----377201 061235Z /15

O 041618Z MAR 81
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8676
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION US UN NY

ARGENTINA PROJECT (5200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 1514

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/4/87 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P

TAGS: SHUM AR

SUBJECT: ARREST OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1495

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE SIX DETAINEES WILL BE QUESTIONED BY JUDGE ANZOATEGUI MARCH 4. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO NEW DEVELOPMENT INDICATING HOW OR WHEN THE AFFAIR WILL BE RESOLVED, POLITICIANS ARE MAKING KNOWN THEIR FEAR THAT THE ARRESTS COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A GENERAL CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE SIX DETAINEES ARE NOW EXPECTED TO GO BEFORE JUDGE ANZOATEGUI MARCH 4. THE EARLIER, AND ERRONEOUS, REPORT THAT HE HAD QUESTIONED THEM MARCH 3 WAS STIMULATED BY THE PRISONERS' TRANSFER FROM FEDERAL POLICE JAIL TO FEDERAL COURT JAIL MARCH 3 (THE ONLY WOMAN AMONG THE DETAINEES IS BEING HELD SEPARATELY, APPARENTLY IN A FACILITY BETTER SUITED TO HOLDING WOMEN PRISONERS). THE PRISONERS WERE STILL INCOMMUNICADO THROUGH MARCH 3.

PAGE 02 BUENOS 00015 061218Z

3. (U) LITTLE MORE HAS EMERGED PUBLICLY ON THIS CASE. "CLARIN" REPORTS THAT A "LEAK" STATED THE INVESTIGATION WILL

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1981BUENOS01514

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

SEEK TO DETERMINE WHY THE DETAINEES HAD IN THEIR POSSESSION "DATA AND INFORMATION ABOUT MILITARY AND SECURITY PERSONNEL AND MAPS AND DRAWINGS OF MILITARY FACILITIES."

4. (U) THIS STORY CONTINUES TO GET BROAD COVERAGE IN THE ARGENTINE PRESS. THE PRESS ALSO CARRIES SUMMARIES OF THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S EXCHANGE WITH PRESS ON THIS INCIDENT AS WELL AS THE ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE LEFEVER'S REMARKS ABOUT THE DETENTIONS AND US POLICY ARE ALSO REPORTED. WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL AS SUMMARIZED BY WIRE SERVICES IS INCLUDED IN THE COVERAGE GIVEN BY BA PAPERS. FINALLY, "LA PRENSA'S" IGLESIA ROUCO, WHO IS WIDELY READ, DEVOTES MOST OF HIS MARCH 4 COLUMN TO THIS STORY, ESPECIALLY TO HOW UNFORTUNATE THESE ARRESTS ARE FOR ARGENTINA'S RELATIONS WITH THE US.

5. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE "CLARIN" REPORT THAT THE ARRESTEES HAD COLLECTED INFORMATION ABOUT MILITARY AND SECURITY PERSONNEL IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD PRIVATELY THAT AMONG THE PAPERS THE POLICE SEIZED ARE REPORTS DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL MILITARY OFFICERS. OUR SOURCE SUGGESTED THAT THE INFORMATION IN THESE REPORTS INDICATED TO THE POLICE THAT CELS WAS COLLECTING INFORMATION ON MILITARY PERSONNEL WHICH COULD BE USED BY TERRORISTS. GIVEN THE RECENT HISTORY OF ARGENTINA IT WOULD NOT BE AT ALL DIFFICULT FOR THE SECURITY FORCES TO DRAW THE [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PAGE 03 BUENOS 00015 061218Z

MOST SINISTER CONCLUSIONS IF THE CELS PAPERS DO INDEED INCLUDE SUCH INFORMATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVEN CELS' DEDICATION TO MAKING THE MILITARY ANSWER FOR ITS PAST, IT WOULD SEEM PERFECTLY LOGICAL, AT LEAST TO THE OUTSIDE OBSERVER, FOR THE ORGANIZATION TO BE COLLECTING INFORMATION AND DATA ON MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO ALLEGEDLY PARTICIPATED IN THE "DIRTY WAR."

5. [REDACTED] SOME OPPOSITION POLITICIANS HERE CONTINUE TO SPECULATE PRIVATELY AND IMPLY PUBLICLY THAT THE ARREST OF THE SIX HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS PRESAGES A GENERAL CRACKDOWN ON THE GOA'S OPPONENTS. PERONIST LEADER DEOLINDO BITTEL WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO GO ON

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1981BUENOS01514

Page: 3

Channel: n/a

RECORD WITH A STATEMENT SUGGESTING THAT HE HARBORS SUCH FEARS. NOW A GROUP OF TWENTY LEFT OF CENTER POLITICIANS ISSUED A PUBLIC DECLARATION WHICH IMPLIES THE SAME QUALMS. THE JOINT STATEMENT LINKS THE DETENTION OF THE ACTIVISTS BOTH WITH THE BRIEF ARREST LAST WEEK OF THE LEADERS OF AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ORGANIZATION (CONAE) THAT HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY VIGOROUS IN OPPOSING THE GOA'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND THE RECENT WARNINGS TO CERTAIN LABOR LEADERS THAT THEY SHOULD GO EASY IN ORGANIZING OPPOSITION TO THE GOA. SHLAUDEMAN

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

[REDACTED]

NVVZCZ

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 3